

## **CHAPTER @ INTRODUCTION**

### **A.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH**

The word patriarchy comes from Greek, meaning that power in a family structure is in the hands of the father, which means that all decisions and orders are decisions that cannot be challenged (Pierik, 2022). Initially, the term was not openly interpreted to mean oppression or domination of women. However, feminist studies have managed to shift this meaning by showing that power relations in the patriarchal system are oppressive and not a natural condition that cannot be changed. Feminist views assert that this unbalanced social structure is not the pure result of biological nature, but rather socially and historically shaped (Facio, 2013). At present, the mention of patriarchy is still a sensitive element, and some people or especially men, think that patriarchy is not a serious problem but just talk, they believe that patriarchy is a natural element and not a serious problem. It should be noted that it is very rare for men to voice women's rights, women are often told to keep silent and not to voice anything. Feminist research shows that today, the oppression perpetrated by patriarchy is already real (Eller, 1991). However, patriarchy is considered normal because it is shrouded in a stigma that is too strong, and people do not care about it.

Patriarchy also refers to a system of social and cultural power that places men at the center of authority, both in the domestic and public spheres, and directly or

indirectly subordinates women (Walby, 1989). In this structure, power relations are not equal, but rather tend to be hierarchical, where men are systematically given the right to control decisions, resources, and even women's bodies and choices. Patriarchy creates social boundaries that direct women to remain in a closed space as mothers and wives, while men dominate the public sphere and all decision-making (Lerner, 1986). Although there has been a social shift that allows women to appear in the public sphere, patriarchal power relations remain structurally and symbolically embedded. This can be seen in how women who show ambition, strength, or independence are often viewed negatively, stigmatized, or even used as objects of social punishment.

One of the most visible forms of how patriarchy maintains its dominance over women is through misogynistic practices that do not only take the form of direct hatred, but function more deeply as a systematic social control mechanism (Walker, 2023). As Kate Manne explains, misogyny should be understood as part of a system that “regulates” women to stay within the lines of behavior deemed appropriate by the patriarchal order (Johnston & Swanson, 2003). In this sense, misogyny works like a cultural policing tool that does not hesitate to impose social sanctions, both symbolic and literal, on women who are perceived as violating the traditional roles that have been attached to them, such as being nurturing, obedient, and not threatening male dominance.

Women who show strength, ambition, or even anger are often not seen as individuals who have the right to express themselves fully, but are constructed as unstable, emotional, and even dangerous to social order. As a result, instead of being recognized for their autonomy and potential, women face systemic rejection when they choose to step outside the confines of established gender roles. The power that women have in this case is not celebrated as a form of independence, but rather becomes an excuse to discredit and reduce them, as if such power is a form of deviance that must be subdued (Munsayac et al., 2024). Misogyny thus serves not only to reinforce gender hierarchies, but also to ensure that women who rebel against these structures remain in subordinate positions through often unrecognized means as a form of symbolic violence (Young, 2022).

In some media representations, women with emotional, spiritual or supernatural powers are deemed unstable. They must not only be controlled, they must be stopped. This becomes a new form of modern misogyny, when women become too powerful, the narrative will organize ways to bring them down. This is a more subtle form of patriarchal control, but it's even more insidious because it's wrapped in a narrative that seems neutral or even feminist (Boyle, 2024). This phenomenon is seen in the narratives of female characters who are positioned as “hidden threats”. When they show strength, the social system or male characters in the story will take control, often under the pretext of “saving the world” or “protecting the right order”. In this position, patriarchy grows

not only from the social system, but also from the male characters themselves who feel they have the authority to judge, control, or even punish women who refuse to be silent.

This kind of misogyny is not explicitly present. It appears in the form of distrust, in the comparison of double standards between men and women, in dialogue, in looks, and even in silence. When a woman acts for herself, the question is no longer whether she is right or wrong, but whether society is willing to accept that power as something legitimate (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). In many stories, including in science fiction and superhero films, male characters who represent rationality often position themselves as moral judges of the actions of female characters who are considered "too emotional" or "uncontrolled."

Olufidipe and Echezabal (2021) identify patterns of sexism and stereotypes against female characters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, but do not examine in depth how the power of women, especially Scarlet Witch, is positioned as a threat to be suppressed. Meanwhile, (Moore et al., 2025) study examines Scarlet Witch trauma and dissociation, as well as how *WandaVision* explores mental health issues, using television studies and character analysis approaches. However, this study does not delve into the specific mechanisms of misogyny that may occur when women's power is not supported, but rather limited or downplayed in the narrative. This gap informs my research, which explores misogyny toward women's power, as men fear women's growing dominance, thus suppressing it through patriarchal practices that ultimately harm women.

It is in this space that strong female characters, such as Scarlet Witch, appear in one of Marvel's popular films, are positioned not as symbolic heroes in *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness (2022)*, but as subjects to be defeated. The male characters in these stories, who feel they are acting in the name of "order," unwittingly exercise patriarchal control over women's will. They do not give women the space to fail in the same way as men, or to be angry without being labeled dangerous (Arsawati & Bunga, 2022). Through this understanding, this study attempts to address the issue of how women's power is framed misogynistically, particularly through the perspective of male characters who feel superior. This study does not only examines character representation but also how film production continues to reproduce stories about men's fear of women who dare to disrupt the patriarchal order.

## **A.2 Problem of the Research**

Based on the background outlined, this study focuses on how Scarlet Witch reflects men's fears of powerful women in a patriarchal society. Although Wanda's actions are rooted in a grieving mother, her character is portrayed as a dangerous threat and her power must be stopped. This raises important questions about how women's identities of power and motherhood are constructed in the film. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following question:

How is the misogynistic view of women's power portrayed in the movie *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness (2022)*?

### **A.3 Objectives of the Research**

This research examines how the film *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* portrays Scarlet Witch as the main object of misogyny, framing her power as a threat to male dominance. The film depicts women's power as dangerous when it challenges societal expectations and entrenched stigma. Through cinematography that visually reinforces patriarchal control over Scarlet Witch, the narrative amplifies fear toward women who wield significant power.

### **A.4 Significance of the Research**

This research discusses how the patriarchal system works in representing female characters, such as Scarlet Witch, who are often the targets of misogyny based hatred because their power is perceived as threatening male dominance. Through this analysis, the research provides a deeper understanding of how women are portrayed within the scope of patriarchal culture, especially in popular films that are widely consumed by the public. In addition, this research aims to open new insights that movies do not only deliver entertainment but can also reproduce negative representations of women. Thus, this research is expected to encourage changes in people's attitudes towards the representation of women in the media and increase critical awareness of misogynistic narratives.

### **A.5 Limitation of the Resarch**

This research specifically focuses on the representation of patriarchal fear of women through the film *Doctor Strange: The Multiverse of Madness* (2022). The analysis is limited to how the film portrays female power as a threat within a misogynistic framework, using Kate Manne theory of misogynistic as the main analytical lens.

#### **A.6 Definition of Key Terms**

##### **Misogyny**

Misogyny is a form of hatred and rejection of women rooted in the patriarchal system, which is a social structure that places men as the dominant power holder and the highest authority in various aspects of life (Srivastava et al., 2017).

##### **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy describes a social structure or system in which men hold the majority of power, control over resources, and enjoy greater social status compared to women (Hill, 2009).

##### **Women Empowerment**

Women empowerment is a journey that provides women with strength, freedom, and authority over their lives, enabling them to make independent choices and decisions. This journey seeks to enhance women's status in society and liberate them from oppression, bias, and different forms of gender-based inequality.

##### **Scarlet Witch**

Scarlet Witch, whose real name is Wanda Maximoff, is one of the most powerful characters in the Marvel Universe. She possesses extensive knowledge of magic and extraordinary magical talents, such as the ability to manipulate reality. Scarlet Witch remains one of Marvel's most famous heroines, despite being portrayed as a villain in the film and having a history of mental illness that pits her against her allies.

### **Cinematography**

Cinematography is the art and technique that fits into how a movie looks on screen. It includes all visual choices like lighting, camera movement and placement, image composition, and colour selections that all work together to create atmosphere.

